

India needs to regulate foreign universities

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Higher education is booming as governments across the world fuel their knowledge economies with skilled graduates. India is no exception. However, like many other countries, India has a shortage of places and a mismatch between graduate skills and what is needed to power economic growth and jobs creation.

Foreign universities have a role to play in meeting these challenges but they must help raise quality as well. The world now has over 26,000 universities and I am proud that Middlesex University is among the top 500, and among the top 150 universities under 50 years old. We have quality but our youth brings something else: innovation.

I welcome how the Government of India is looking to open up opportunities for foreign universities as it strives to increase the number of university places and drive up quality. But India

also needs innovation in education. Our youth means we are open to people, places and ideas that drive innovation, such as our renowned practice-based teaching methods or the creativity that comes from the rich diversity of our staff and students, recently recognised with a Gold charter mark, the first UK University to achieve this distinction.

British higher education is admired across the globe for its high academic standards and the autonomy of its universities; autonomy which India is only just starting to recognise as crucial to high standards of scholarship. Over-regulation is a great danger. Good regulation can raise quality and encourage innovation, including creating opportunities for Indian students to study for British degrees in India.

As well as our home campus in London we have three overseas campuses in Mauritius, Dubai and Malta. Their governments

tell us that our value is not just the relevance of our degrees to labour market needs but the quality benchmark our presence establishes, raising everyone's game.

We welcome Indian students to all our campuses yet I can see great mutual advantages of expanding in-country provision and bringing Middlesex to India.

While many Indian students want the incredible experience of studying and working in London, many others want a less expensive or more convenient option of achieving a prestigious, skills-based British degree in India. Others will opt for a combination of local and overseas study. Education is the key to economic and social progress, from high value-added industries to social justice and empowerment. At Middlesex, our vision is 'to transform potential into success' and it is a vision that we are keen to share with the immense potential of India.

The author is Vice-Chancellor of Middlesex University London